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ABSTRACT

The handbook is intended as a guide to help teachers and coordinators in programs for gifted and talented students. Sections present situations and suggestions for action in the following topic areas with sample situations: school administration (refusal of district administration to apply for state aid); coordination responsibilities (request by a student to drop out of the program); individual problems observed in gifted students (parental request for early kindergarten entrance for their child); classes of gifted students (arrogant attitudes toward students not in the class); gifted students in regular classes (use of a self-managing reading group program); parents (parental anxiety); and community (promotion of the idea that gifted education is elitist). (CL)

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Handbook

for Teachers & Coordinators of Classes & Programs for Gifted & Talented Students

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State of Minnesota
Department of Education

Minnesota Advisory Council for the Gifted

EC 182363

PREFACE

Although there are over one hundred definitions of "a gifted person" in use today the following definition will be used throughout this publication:

A gifted student is one who possesses intellectual, creative, aesthetic, leadership or other qualities so superior to his peers that he requires an education which is different from that received by his peers.

Teachers and administrators of programs for gifted and talented programs have been found to experience similar problematic situations which I've addressed in this handbook. Educators throughout the nation have successfully resolved these situations through implementation of the recommended procedures offered in this handbook.

Realizing the diversity within the numerous gifted programs, the handbook serves merely as a guide. Formulating <u>your</u> own solutions specific to <u>your</u> particular gifted program is the ultimate purpose.

Read on for ideas, think on for creative solutions!

Lorraine Hertz, Editor
Program Specialist in
Gifted Education

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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1. Situation:

The district administration refuses to apply for State Aids for Gifted and Talented Students.

Suggestions:

1. After determining the reason for the lack of action, make a written request for the funds. In this request, respond to the stated reasons. Contact the Program Specialist for the Gifted at the Minnesota Department of Education for specific information about district responsibilities. (612-296-4072)

2. Prepare a suggested budget which would explain one way in which the funds could be spent.

2. Situation:

A gifted student's needs have been diagnosed and a number of possible changes in his or her program have been made to the administration but approval of any one of the changes has not been given.

Suggestions:

1. Ask for a conference with the administration so that you can clarify the suggested changes.

2. Discuss the problem with the school counselor, social worker and/or psychologist for input in order to modify the recommendations.

3. If the counselor, social worker and/or psychologist support the recommendations ask them to relay their support to the administration.

4. If the administration refuses to accept any of the suggestions, ask for their help in developing some other ideas.

3. Situation:

A number of possible solutions to problems observed in teaching gifted students have been submitted to the administration but no action is forthcoming.

Suggestions:

1. Ask for a conference with the administration in order to clarify the suggested solutions.

2. Ask the administration if there are any aspects of the solutions which they feel should be eliminated or redesigned.

3. Solicit other possible solutions to the problem from the administration.

4. Identify models of programs similar to suggested solutions so they can be visited.

4. Situation:

Principal complains that the class for gifted students is too noisy.

Suggestions:

1. Study class behavior and modify the curriculum so that there is a lower level of noise in the classroom.

2. Schedule "noisy" activities in areas where activities will not disturb other classes, i.e., gymnasium, cafeteria, out-of-doors, etc.

COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Situation:

The directions for completing the Application Form for State Aid for the Gifted and Talented are difficult to understand.

Suggestions:

1. Make an unduplicated count of all the students (K-12) in the district who are enrolled in advanced and enriched classes. Write this number in response to the third statement which states, "The number of district students identified as gifted and talented is: ___students."

2. This number should not exceed 5% of the district's average daily membership for the preceding year.

3. Each district will receive an amount equal to the number of students indicated in response to this third question times $16.25 for the 1981-1982 school year. The amount for 1982-1983 will be $17.50.

4. If an error has been made, immediately send a correction to the State Aids Section, Minnesota Department of Education, Ninth Floor, Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, MN 55101.

5. Refer to the June 20, 1981 letter for more information, (letter and application form follow)

2. Situation:

A student is in the program for the gifted and has requested permission to drop out of the program.

Suggestions:

1. Find out from the student the reasons behind this request.

2. Try to resolve any conflicts or misunderstandings.

3. If these modifications do not satisfy the student allow him or her to drop. If appropriate, leave the option open so he or she can return.

3. Situation:

Coordinator of the program is not given a specific budget for the program.

Suggestions:

1. Explain to the principal or superintendent that precise information is needed in order to make wise use of available funds.

2. If an exact budget figure is not feasible, request a minimum amount so that some plans can be made.

3. Ask which regular district funds can be used for books, supplies, etc.

Minnesota State Department of Education
Capitol Square ☐ 550 Cedar Street ☐ St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Phone: (612) 296-4072

M E M O R A N D U M

Date: June 20, 1981

To: Superintendents of Public Schools in Minnesota

From: Lorraine Hertz, Program Specialist in Gifted Education

Subject: Minnesota Gifted and Talented Aids - FY82 and FY83

The following bill was passed by the Minnesota State Legislature in May 1981 and was included in the Omnibus State Aids bill and signed by Governor Quie:

> Sec. 21 Subd. 3. (AID.) A district which establishes a program for gifted and talented students shall receive for the purpose of this program an amount equal to $16.25, in the 1981-1982 school year, and $17.50 in the 1982-1983 school year, times the number of gifted and talented students in the district. No more than 5 percent of the students enrolled in the district shall be counted as gifted and talented for the purpose of aid computations pursuant to this subdivision. No more than five percent of the moneys received by a district pursuant to this subdivision may be expended for the purpose of administration of the program for gifted and talented students.
>
> The appropriation for Fiscal Year 82 (1981-82) is $588,300 and Fiscal Year 83 (1982-83) is $543,660.

The appropriation is adequate to cover aids for every school district in Minnesota. Please note that there is a change in the language. The bill provides $16.25 for each gifted student up to a maximum of 5% of the ADM. For example, a district with an average daily membership of 2800 students which has 5% or 140 students involved in various program options for gifted and talented students would receive $2,275 in gifted and talented aids. This amount is determined by this procedure: 5% of 2800 ADM = 140 Students, 140 x $16.25 = $2,275.

Program Options for the Gifted and Talented (on back) will assist district in obtaining an unduplicated count of gifted and talented students. This count is to be used in completing the Verification of Data for Gifted and Talented Programs which will be sent to districts early this fall.

Each local district has the option to design a program which will meet the specific needs of its gifted and talented students. For this reason your district may include additional offerings in its list of Program Options for the Gifted and Talented. If there are any questions, please call me at 612-296-4072.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

In order to assist districts in determining the number of gifted and talented students it is serving, the following list of Program Options for the Gifted and Talented has been prepared:

PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

ELEMENTARY

1. Part-time resource classes; e.g. Junior Great Books, Omnibus, advanced topic short courses, revolving door programs, etc.
2. Cluster classes - self-contained classes with small groups (cluster) of gifted students - (count gifted students only)
3. Guided independent study on a scheduled basis with school district personnel or community mentors
4. Self-contained full-time class for gifted children
5. Summer school class for gifted students

JUNIOR HIGH OR MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Advanced or enriched sections of English, math, science or social studies
2. Part-time resource classes
3. Guided independent study with school personnel or community mentors
4. Summer shcool classes for gifted and talented students

HIGH SCHOOL

1. First year physics
2. Second year chemistry
3. Second year biology
4. Third or fourth year foreign language
5. College-bound English courses (local district determination of college-bound courses)
6. Math courses beyond geometry
7. Humanities
8. Music theory or composition
9. Advanced Art
10. Advanced Computer
11. Advanced electronics
12. Advanced industrial arts (district determination)
13. Guided independent study with district staff or community mentors
14. Summer school courses for gifted and talented students
15. Advanced music classes

Minnesota State Department of Education	State Aids Section 915 Capitol Square - 550 Cedar St. Paul, MN 55101	GIFTED AND TALENTED AIDS PROGRAM CERTIFICATION OF DATA FOR CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR	ED-01495-03

THIS CERTIFICATION APPLIES TO SCHOOL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 19____

GENERAL INFORMATION: Minnesota Statutes 124.247 provides school districts which have established a program for gifted and talented students, state aid funding based on the number of gifted and talented students in the district. Funds received shall be spent only for the purpose of the program for gifted and talented students with no more than 5 percent being expended for purposes of administration. A district which receives funds under this program must maintain a separate account for the receipt and disbursement of funds so allocated.

INSTRUCTIONS: (1) School districts qualified and interested in receiving the identified aid should complete this form.

(2) Retain a copy of the completed form for local district records.

(3) Return the completed form to the above address prior to October 15.

DISTRICT IDENTIFICATION

Name of School District		District Number
Name of District Contact	**Title**	**Telephone (Include Area Code)**
		( )

PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. A program for gifted and talented students has been established by the district. ☐ YES ☐ NO

2. A separate account for the receipt and disbursement of funds for this program has been established by the district. ☐ YES ☐ NO

3. The number of district students identified as gifted and talented is: _____ STUDENTS

NOTE: Aid entitlement will be based on the number of gifted and talented students identified up to the maximum number allowable by statute.

CERTIFICATION OF INFORMATION

I hereby certify that the above information is true and correct.

10

Singature - Superintendent of School District

Date

4. Situation:

The principal of the school which has a program for the gifted does not appear to be supportive of the program.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss the program with the principal and ask for his or her recommendations for improving the program. Follow these recommendations if at all possible.

2. Publicly give the principal credit for the program whenever possible.

3. Always be supportive of the principal with the faculty, with the students and with their parents.

4. Ask principal for advice whenever planning changes in the program.

5. Situation:

School faculty members refuse to cooperate with the coordinator of the gifted program.

Suggestions:

1. Coordinator could discuss this problem with the principal to find out the reasons for this. The coordinator would be wise to act on the principal's recommendation.

2. If the principal is not aware of the cause, the coordinator might ask a faculty member who has been cooperative.

3. If no reason can be found, the coordinator could ask the principal for a faculty committee to help plan the program.

4. Perhaps the faculty feels left out of the program or doesn't understand it. In-service by an out-of-the district speaker is useful. In addition, a simple weekly or monthly newsletter in which the coordinator describes the program for the next week or month is very important.

5. If students are to be excused from regular classes, it is essential that this schedule be jointly planned by the teachers and the coordinator.

6. The coordinator should support the faculty in every possible way.

6. Situation:

The gifted and talented program has been recommended as one program to be cut.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss this matter with the district Advisory Committee or Task Force for the Gifted. If there is no committee, form one as soon as possible. Follow their recommendations.

2. Prepare a number of revisions for the program, including estimated budgets.

3. Write a report which explains the benefits to be obtained from each revision.

4. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the current year's program. Be careful to include pre- and post-data for each student in the program.

7. Situation:

The school administration has asked the coordinator to conduct an evaluation of the program.

Suggestions:

1. If there are adequate funds in the budget ($1,000 - $2,000) hire a professional evaluator.

2. If there are no evaluation funds, contact the Program Specialist for Gifted Education, 641 Capitol Square, St. Paul, MN 55101 (296-4072) for assistance. Two evaluation resource booklets, which include evaluation instruments, can be obtained from her upon request.

8. Situation:

After a period of time (2-3 months) it is obvious that a student was inappropriately placed in a gifted program.

Suggestions:

1. If the student is in the elementary grades, discuss this problem in a conference with the parents. It is far better for the student if the parent requests that the youngster leave the program. If the parent wishes to keep the student in the program it is usually best to cooperate with the parent. At all times all concerned must try to do what is best for the student. If the student is not suffering in the program it is usually better not to have to imply that a mistake was made and he or she is not really gifted after all.

9. Situation:

As the director of a program for gifted students you become aware that one of the teachers in the program is not effective with gifted students.

Suggestions:

1. Monitor the class and document teacher behaviors.

2. Discuss these behaviors with the teacher.

3. Give the teacher time to modify his or her behavior.

4. If there is insufficient improvement, arrange a transfer for the teacher.

10. Situation:

Some students arrive late to resource class sessions because their classroom teachers do not release them according to the agreed upon schedule.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss this matter with the teacher to find out what can be done. (In a few cases another schedule may be necessary. Most of the time the youngster should be given the responsibility for leaving his or her classroom on time.)

2. If negotiation with the teacher fails, it may be necessary to discuss it with the principal. However, it is better to solve the problem directly with the teacher.

11. Situation:

Psychologist makes recommendations for one of your students which you feel will be counter-productive.

Suggestions:

1. Call the psychologist and discuss the recommendations you question.

2. If the psychologist does not wish to modify his or her recommendations, express your concerns in a memo to your principal.

3. Follow your principal's directions in following the recommendations.

12. Situation:

Student is becoming a school phobic and does everything he or she can to stay home from school.

Suggestions:

1. Ask parents to schedule a complete physical examination for their youngster.

2. Discuss the situation with the child's teachers and parents in order to find out when the problem started and possible causes for it.

3. Make changes in the school situation wherever evidence indicates that they might be beneficial.

4. If these changes do not begin to solve the problem, recommend that the parents take the youngster for family counseling.

5. Follow the recommendations made by the counselor.

INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS OBSERVED IN GIFTED STUDENTS

1. Situation:

Parents request early entrance to kindergarten for their child.

Suggestions:

1. Follow district policy in making the decision.

2. If the child meets the criteria, consider accepting the youngster on a month's trial basis. This will give the kindergarten teacher time to observe the child in the school setting. If the parents and the teacher together decide that the child would be better off to wait a year, there is no feeling of failure because acceptance was only on a trial basis.

2. Situation:

The student's daily work is not only often incomplete but sometimes non-existent.

Suggestions:

1. If this appears to be a long-established pattern, follow as many of these recommendations as necessary.

   a. Reduce the size of the assignments to as small a sample as you feel the student actually needs. In this way the student can feel success quickly.

   b. Try many open-ended assignments. For example: rather than assigning 2 pages of work problems allow students to substitute a smaller number of problems which they make up (including answers). If possible, duplicate these problems for other students. Follow this substitution procedure with assignments requiring students to answer questions at the end of the chapter, etc.

   c. Eliminate competition between students.

   d. Have a variable test schedule so student can take the test when he or she is sufficiently prepared to do well.

   e. If school has a group of gifted under-achievers, consider implementing a gifted underachiever program modeled after the Upper Saddle River Program in New Jersey. This program description can be obtained from L. Hertz, 641 Capitol Square, St. Paul, MN 55101 (612-296-4072).

   f. Set up a system where the student keeps his or her own record of projects or assignments completed.

   g. Work with the parents to design a cooperative program where student will receive praise for each small accomplishment. This type of student is often a perfectionist and must be helped to see that he is not expected to do perfect work.

3. Situation:

The student appears to be under a great deal of pressure and is anxious and tense about situations which formerly were not disturbing.

Suggestions:

1. Try to eliminate (or at least reduce) the situations which cause the problem.

2. Talk to the student privately and ask if there is anything you can do to help him or her. One must be careful not to press too hard for fear the student be forced to reveal information he or she feels should not be revealed.

3. If the problem persists, refer the student to the appropriate person, i.e., psychologist or counselor.

4. Situation:

The gifted student purposely enrolls in "easy" courses in order to ensure A's.

Suggestions:

1. Encourage administration to give greater weighting to the grades in honors courses. Students are concerned with class rank and honor points when they are applying to colleges.

2. Counsel with student about the importance of various courses to their future plans.

3. Urge administration to urge teachers of honors courses to give grades on the basis of achievement rather than based on the curve. It is possible that all of the students should earn A's or B's.

5. Situation:

A gifted high school student wants to start college instead of completing his senior year.

Suggestions:

1. Encourage student to visit classes at a nearby college if possible.

2. If student is a junior encourage student to take a night school class or attend summer school at a college if possible.

3. If student's parents agree to this step, make arrangements for student to take college entrance tests and enter college. Provide an alternative plan so that student can return to high school if initial college experiences are not satisfactory.

4. Maintain contact with student during first year in college.

6. **Situation:**

A gifted student's achievement scores are at or below grade level.

Suggestions:

1. Study previous achievement test scores to determine if there has been a change.

2. Study the curriculum to determine whether there is sufficient academic challenge so that the student's interest in learning is maintained.

3. Design a program for gifted underachievers and include this student in it. Contact Program Specialist for Gifted Education at 641 Capitol Square, St. Paul, MN 55101 (612-296-4072) for program descriptions.

4. Work with the parents and teachers to provide a climate in which criticism and competition are kept to a minimum.

7. **Situation:**

A gifted student has extremely high standards of perfection and spends an inappropriate amount of time on his assignments. In some cases the student may refuse to complete assignments for fear of not doing perfect work.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss the problem with the student and jointly set up a scale of appropriate times to spend on assignments. Ask student to record the time spent on each assignment. Use this as the basis for your joint evaluation of student's work.

2. Through the use of a variety of activities, planned by teacher so that student will be successful, try to develop student's self-concept.

3. Discuss this matter with parents of the student and encourage them to help their child to feel more secure by not demanding perfection.

8. **Situation:**

The gifted student enthusiastically volunteers for many projects but is unable to complete them.

Suggestions:

1. Jointly determine the time when a project is to be completed.

2. Help student to plan a project that can be completed rather easily.

3. Monitor (or set up a monitoring system) progress on the project.

4. Reinforce completion of each project.

5. Do not accept student's offer to start another project until previous one is completed.

6. Occasionally offer to help toward the end of the project if student is becoming bogged down.

7. Discuss the necessity for completing activities at home with student's parents.

9. Situation:

The gifted student either acts in a belligerent fashion or sulks when he or she does not get his or her own way.

Suggestions:

1. Speak to students about the necessity for all students to have chances for their ideas to be used.

2. Employ a tally system to demonstrate to the student how often he or she exhibits poor sportmanship.

3. Discuss this situation with the student's parents.

4. If the problem persists, consult with school counselor or psychologist for help.

10. Situation:

A student prefers solitary activities to those which involve other students.

Suggestions:

1. Observe student to determine if his or her desire for solitary activities is caused by morbid withdrawal (fear of participating with others because he or she might not succeed) or healthy solitude (when he or she prefers a solitary activity to group participation).

2. If student's withdrawal seems to be due to fear, refer student to psychologist and counselor for careful testing and recommendations.

3. It is important that the student be given opportunities to succeed in group experiences. Plans should be carefully made so that the students he or she works with are very supportive and that the topic is one in which he or she has some expertise.

4. Use a sociogram to help determine which student he or she can be paired with for certain activities.

11. Situation:

The gifted student is so anxious to please and to be perfect that he or she is often quite tense.

Suggestions:

1. Provide many opportunities besides perfect work for student to earn approval of teacher and of the class.

2. Reduce assignments so that student will feel less pressure to be perfect.

3. Schedule student into some "purely for fun" activities with a few easy-going students.

4. Discuss the situation with the student's parents and urge them to accept less than perfect behavior.

12. Situation:

The gifted student withdraws from physical education activities because classmates make fun of his or her poor performance.

Suggestion:

1. Work out an exchange with a teacher in a lower grade to enable a few less able physical education students to take gym with the younger children and an equal number of the younger children will join your class.

2. Divide students into squads occasionally according to physical ability so that they can practice on needed skills.

3. Avoid competitive games for a time until the student has regained his or her confidence.

4. Encourage student's family to find satisfying after-school physical activities for him or her.

13. Situation:

A gifted student is so active that neither the student nor classmates can function well in class.

Suggestions:

1. Recommend that the student be given physical and neurological examinations.

2. Discuss the problem with student's former teacher, the principal, psychologist, his parents and others who can help design a program to help alleviate the problem. Possibilities may include behavior management, shorter school day, modified curriculum.

14. Situation:

The gifted student refuses to do in-depth work, preferring the assignments which are extremely simple.

Suggestions:

1. Ask the student to serve on a committee to plan optional assignments. Class members who are creative and enjoy challenging work should be included on this committee.

2. Make group assignments and include student in a group of students who get satisfaction from in-depth study.

3. Provide many opportunities for students to design their own independent study plans (or contracts).

1. Situation:

A student who did not meet the selection criteria asks to be included in the program.

Suggestions:

1. If the class size is variable and if the student's abilities are close to those in the program, invite the student to join on a trial basis. It is usually the case that a highly motivated youngster will do well in a program.

2. If there is a large discrepancy between the abilities of this student and those in the program, try to find another option for this student.

2. Situation:

School staff members complain of the special favors the gifted class receives, i.e., field trips, guest speakers, etc.

Suggestions:

1. Examine the budget. Unless the gifted class has outside funding sources it probably would be better not to provide a larger share of the school funds than other classes receive. Often parents are happy to provide transportation for field trips.

2. When a guest speaker is invited to the gifted class it is recommended that another class be invited to join in the class discussion preceding the speech and the speech itself.

3. Situation:

Student does not want to be in an enriched class or program even though he or she has met the selection criteria.

Suggestion:

1. If student's decision is definite after the program is explained completely, do not force student. However, if possible, leave the option open so that the student can apply later. Youngsters are often wary at first of new programs but change their minds after hearing good things about them.

4. Situation:

The advanced class members are becoming increasingly negative toward completing assignments.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss the situation with the class to find out the reasons for their behavior and revise the lessons whenever possible.

2. With younger children revise the format and curriculum to discover more effective methods.

5. Situation:

A class of gifted students has developed an arrogant attitude toward students not in their class.

Suggestions:

1. Plan a number of discussion sessions with these students in order to help them to become more sensitive to the needs of all people.

2. An important aspect of these sessions would be to help them to realize that they did not earn their ability, that their abilities are really gifts. A crucial question for them to face is, "How do they propose to use their ability?"

3. Design a number of classes which integrate these students with other classes.

6. Situation:

A class of gifted students is enrolled in an independent study course and the students are completing their projects hurriedly and carelessly.

Suggestions:

1. Call the group together and jointly set standards for the course. It is important that they realize that Independent Study is reserved only for those who are willing to maintain standards.

2. Periodic scheduled conferences should be held with each student in order to monitor and evaluate progress. At these times changes in the overall plan might be necessary.

7. Situation:

A number of students do not complete assignments which they have been told will not be graded.

Suggestions:

1. Hold a class discussion about grades: why they are necessary, when they are needed and when they are not needed.

2. Substitute various methods of evaluation for grades. Perhaps comments will be more satisfactory.

3. When appropriate, have students set up grading criteria and then grade each other's assignments.

GIFTED STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSES

1. Situation:

A gifted student's individual I.Q. reported by the psychologist is above 140 and is attending a school where there are no students in his class close to him in intellectual ability.

Suggestions:

1. Study the results of the diagnostic tests and student's emotional and social maturity in order to decide if he or she should do advanced work in certain subjects, be double-promoted, or if there are opportunities for his or her assigned teacher to provide an appropriate education for him.

2. Provide opportunities for student to be with a group of children close to his or her mental ability in a nongraded activity or club such as Junior Great Books.

3. If possible, place other bright students from other sections in his classroom so teacher will have a cluster of bright students who can work together within the class.

2. Situation:

A gifted student's reading ability is superior to that of his classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Administer a diagnostic reading test in order to have information on which to base a reading placement decision.

2. If student's social and emotional maturity are such that he or she can gain from placement in reading class with older students, explore this possibility with administration and the classroom teacher who will be involved.

3. Implement the Self-Managing Reading Program for a small group of superior readers from two or three grades. It could meet one period per week. (Program follows this page.)

3. Situation:

The gifted student does not complete his assignments.

Suggestions:

1. Re-examine assignments in light of the evidence you have of student's mental ability in the subject. If the assignments are too simple, substitute others at the analysis and synthesis levels.

2. Provide shorter assignments until student has experienced satisfaction in completing what is assigned.

SELF-MANAGING READING GROUP PROGRAM

Purposes

The self-managing reading group program, used successfully by many teachers, has the following advantages:

1. It is easy to administer.
2. It provides for individual differences.
3. It trains children in self-reliance and in democratic committee work and in leadership.
4. It instills in children a more favorable attitude toward reading.
5. It frees the teacher to give individual and small-group remedial and enrichment instruction.
6. It affords all children a greater amount of daily practice in oral and written composition.
7. It requires each child to actively participate in the learning process
8. It assists introverts in becoming more outgoing, articulate, and in establishing friendships.
9. It brings peer pressure in assisting children to overcome anti-social behavior.
10. It facilitates the administration of multi-test reading in science and social studies.

Procedure

Students are chosen for the program on the basis of standardized reading-test scores, information from previous teachers, texts previously read, and observation of the child's oral and silent reading. There should not be more than a six-month range in reading ability among the pupils within any group. Group size should be between four and seven with five or six as the optimum number. When a group receives its eighth member, the group should be divided.

After explaining the job of the chairman and secretary and discussing the qualities desired in a chairman and secretary, the teacher has the group elect a chairman and a secretary. The opportunity to "conduct your own reading group" is presented as an honor and privilege.

Each group is provided with several reading texts of appropriate difficulty. The texts should be above grade level, close to their reading level. The group creates a more favorable attitude toward the book. If the group is using a basic reader, students decide on the selections they wish to read.

At the beginning of the reading period the chairman puts the reading assignments on the chalkboard.

The selections are assigned according to the sequence the students have agreed upon.

SELF-MANAGING READING GROUP PROGRAM

To the student:

You have been selected by your teacher as a very capable reader and a responsible student. You are to be a member of a small group of students who will become involved in an independent reading plan.

Procedure for Independent Reading Plan:

A. Choose a chairman and a secretary for your group. They will serve the group for approximately two weeks then other students will be chosen.

The chairman will:

a. Write the group's reading assignment on the board each day.
b. Conduct the group meeting after all have completed the assignment.

The secretary will:

a. Keep a notebook in which the names of the students are listed.
b. Collect the papers after a group discussion.
c. Check off the papers for each student in appropriate columns in the notebook.
d. Give the papers to the teacher.

Each student in the group will:

a. Read the assignment.
b. Prepare the following in writing;
   1. A summary of the story in one or two sentences.
   2. Two questions on the story-these questions should begin with words why or how.
   3. A list of the difficult words from the story.
c. Read a library book when he has finished reading the assignment and completed the written work.

B. Reading-group meetings are held when members of the group have completed the reading assignment and the written work. The chairman conducts the meeting. The steps below are followed in these group meetings.

a. Each member of the group reads his sentence of what the story is about.
b. The chairman calls on each member to ask one of the questions he has composed. Members of the group will take turns answering these questions.
c. Each member presents three difficult words. The groups helps with the meaning and pronunciation of the words. The group may decide to have difficult words looked up in the dictionary before the group meeting.
d. Members tell what part of the story each liked best. They discuss anything new or interesting they have learned from the story.
e. At the end of the discussion period the secretary collects the papers after making certain the student's name is on the paper.

3. This student could plan alternative assignments with other students in the class.

4. Set up a monitoring system for long-range assignments.

5. Offer to help student when he or she gets bogged down on his assignments.

4. Situation:

The gifted student does his or her work in a careless and sloppy fashion because of being in a hurry to be the first one finished.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss the problem with the student and jointly set up standards of work that will be acceptable.

2. If there are others whose work is careless involve them in a joint setting of standards. Be consistent in accepting only what meets the standards you jointly have set.

3. Find ways to recognize the carefully done work (by putting on bulletin boards, printing for distribution, etc.) and ignoring the work that is completed first unless it is according to standard.

4. If student hurries to be the first one finished, try to find ways to build student's self-concept so that he or she won't need this type of recognition.

5. Situation:

The gifted student treats classmates in an arrogant manner.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss this problem with the student to help him or her to realize the effects this has on classmates and how they will not want to work or play with him or her.

2. Discuss this problem with the student's parents in order to gain their cooperation. (In some cases the parents have inadvertently fostered this arrogance.)

3. Provide opportunities for many members of class to receive recognition.

4. Provide opportunities for student to work with other gifted children so the student will realize that there are many bright students in the school.

6. Situation:

A student has outstanding talent in writing

Suggestions:

1. Provide many opportunities for student to write, possibly substituting a writing assignment for another type of assignment occasionally.

2. Initiate a class or school newspaper or magazine project so that those who enjoy creative writing do extensive work and have a finished project.

3. If the student is not yet in high school, the high school newspaper staff might consider including the student as a junior reporter.

7. Situation:

A student's math ability is superior to that of his or her classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Administer a diagnostic math test in order to determine what placement would be most suitable. Young children should not be expected to do assignments beyond his or her writing ability.

2. An opportunity should be given to the student to test out of units or math courses and take advanced classes.

3. Individualized math programs can be provided.

8. Situation:

A child has the ability to read with an advanced class but is not able to complete accompanying written workbook assignments.

Suggestions:

1. Coordinate reading schedules between classroom teacher and teacher who teaches the appropriate reading level group so that child has phonics work with classroom teacher and oral reading and discussion with teacher of advanced level. Child should not use a workbook until he or she is comfortable with writing or printing.

2. Include child in Junior Great Books program at his or her reading level.

9. Situation:

A student's science ability is superior to that of his classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Provide many opportunities for student to design and conduct experiments.

2. Non-graded science resource programs could be implemented for scientifically gifted students.

3. In the elementary school the student could be asked to design and conduct experiments for his or her class and for other classes, preferably with the cooperation of other students.

10. Situation:

A student's ability to comprehend and use social studies concepts is superior to the other members of the class.

Suggestions:

1. Student be given unit test before beginning the unit. If student tests out of unit student could spend time on creative or research projects rather than on the regular curriculum.

2. Social studies teacher should include a variety of assignments for a wide range of abilities.

3. A group of students could be allowed to plan assignments upon occasion.

11. Situation:

A student's spelling ability is far superior to that of most of the other students.

Suggestions:

1. Spelling words might be dictated for the coming two or more weeks and then requiring student to study the words missed.

2. Time saved could be used for different activities. These activities should be jointly planned by the student and his teacher.

3. A group of able spellers could dictate spelling words to each other and administer their own spelling program.

4. The Self-Managing Spelling Program could be implemented for a few superior spellers. (Program follows.)

12. Situation:

A gifted student has transferred from a school where his or her classmates were at a much higher intellectual level than the students in the local district.

Suggestions:

1. Study student's standardized achievement test results and social and emotional maturity. Consult with parents to determine an appropriate grade placement.

SELF-MANAGING SPELLING GROUP PLAN

Purposes

The self-managing spelling group plan, has the following advantages:

1) It is easy to administer.
2) It provides for individual differences.
3) It trains children in self-reliance and in democratic committee work and in leadership.
4) It instills in children a more favorable attitude toward spelling.
5) It requires each child to actively participate in the learning process.
6) It assists introverts in becoming more outgoing, articulate, and in establishing friendships.
7) It brings peer pressure in assisting children to enjoy social behavior.
8) It provides superior spellers with challenging spelling lessons rather than boring experiences in spelling.

Procedure

A group of children who consistently spell above grade level is formed on the basis of standardized spelling scores, information from previous teachers, and observation of the child's informal spelling. Group size should be between four and seven with five or six as the optimum number. When a group receives its eighth member, the group should be divided. Grouping should be flexible, and pupils should be moved in and out of the group on the basis of individual progress.

After explaining the job of the chairman and discussing the qualities desired in a chairman, the teacher has the group elect a chairman. The opportunity to "conduct your own spelling group" is presented as an honor and privilege.

The group is provided with several spelling lists of appropriate difficulty or makes up its own lists of words each week. The list may be at, or several years above grade level. The group selects the list it would like to try first. Selection of the list by the group creates a more favorable attitude toward the list.

At the beginning of the spelling period the teacher, or preferably the chairman, puts the spelling assignments on the chalkboard. Generally the words are assigned in the sequence in which they occur in the list, but not necessarily. Chairmen should be instructed to select the assignment well in advance so that it will be on the chalkboard when the spelling period begins.

Each child in the group, including the chairman, reads the list after which the following things are done:

1) Discuss meaning of each word.
2) Orally give a sentence using each word.
3) Choose partners and practice dictating words to each other until both can spell words perfectly.
4) Teacher dictates words on Thursday, and students write them in spelling notebooks.
5) Group members study words they have misspelled until they know them.
6) Partners dictate misspelled words on Friday.
7) Words still misspelled are added to specific children's list of words for following week so that words are carried from week to week until they are learned.

2. If the student is to remain with chronological peers make arrangements so that student can work with students who are at his or her academic level (whether or not they are in classroom or in an advanced grade.)

3. Provide resource classes or independent study projects which will fit the student's advanced knowledge and ability.

13. Situation:

A gifted student completes assignments quickly and then disturbs classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Re-examine student's assignments to see if they can be made more challenging. Be careful not to give additional work, just something instead that is more appropriate for the student.

2. Try to include other students in some of these assignments.

3. Give student an opportunity to test out of some required work and allow student to enroll in a different course.

4. Encourage the student to plan a project to be worked on during free time in school.

14. Situation:

A gifted student refuses to work on drill activities which he or she feels is not needed, e.g. handwriting, arithmetic facts, etc.

Suggestions:

1. Jointly set up a standard which, when it is achieved, will signify that further drill will not be needed.

2. Provide options as to when drill activities can be completed. Student may prefer doing the practice at home rather than miss interesting activities at school.

15. Situation:

The gifted student acts in a super-sophisticated manner, seeming to dare his or her teachers to just try to teach him something he doesn't already know.

Suggestions:

1. Enlist the help of this student and others to plan a unit and share in the teaching of it.

2. Re-examine the curriculum to see if the student's classes are sufficiently challenging.

3. Student should be given chances to test out of various units and given appropriate alternate assignments.

4. Work with parents and school counselor or social worker to help the student to change his or her attitude.

16. Situation:

The gifted student polarizes the class through socially destructive methods.

Suggestions:

1. Design opportunities for the student to gain social approval from his or her classmates.

2. Teach the class the Creative Problem Solving Process and then make use of it whenever a controversy comes up in the class. Give this student opportunities to conduct the Creative Problem Solving sessions and this may change his or her behavior. (Process follows.)

3. Re-examine the student's educational program in order to decide if it is sufficiently challenging. If not, make appropriate changes.

17. Situation:

A gifted student is not accepted by classmates because he or she is a year younger than they.

Suggestions:

1. Study student's achievement test results to determine if there are some areas in which the student needs help to reach the level of his class.

2. If student's achievement is superior to his colleagues, lessen some assignments if he or she appears to be tense about them.

3. Excuse student from social responsibilities which might call for more mature behavior until he or she is ready for them.

4. If student's problem is severe he or she should be referred to a school counselor. Perhaps a program should be provided where he or she will take two years to do a year's work and thus re-enter chronological age group.

18. Situation:

The gifted student often misses school through feigning illness.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss this problem with student's parents. Recommend a complete physical examination to rule out actual illness.

2. Try to find out why student prefers to miss school and design a plan for remediating the problem. Student may need help in completing assignments if unfinished assignments are the major reason for missing school.

THE CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS - as developed by Dr. Sidney J. Parnes, Professor of Creative Studies, State University of New York College at Buffalo.

I. Overview of Situation
   A. What is the general picture of the situation?
   B. Why is it a problem?

II. Fact Finding
   A. Who?
   B. What?
   C. When?
   D. Where?
   E. How?

III. Problem-Finding
   A. Pinpoint the actual problem
      1. "In what ways might I.....?
      2. "How many ways can I.....?

IV. Idea Finding or "Brainstorming"
   A. Withhold judgment
   B. Suggest and record in phrases - not sentences
   C. Suggest ideas as fast as possible
   D. Hitchhike or piggy back on ideas
   E. Suggest "far-out", "almost impossible" ideas

V. Solution-Finding
   A. Set up five or six criteria which are specifically appropriate for judging your suggested solutions.
   B. Set up a matrix:

CRITERIA

SOLUTIONS						Total
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

   C. Decide on a scale, e.g.

      4 - Superior
      3 - Good
      2 - Average
      1 - Poor
      0 - Useless

(continued on next page)

D. Score the solutions on your matrix

VI. Acceptance-Finding (Implementation)

A. Acceptance
In what ways might I gain acceptance?

B. Anticipation
How might I overcome anticipated objections?

C. Assistance
In what ways might other persons or groups help me?

D. Locations
What places or locations might be advantageous?

E. Timing
In what ways might I use special times, dates, etc.?

F. Precautions
What problems should be avoided?

3. Include student on committee which plans special activities or projects for school.

4. Family may require counseling.

19. Situation:

The gifted student acts as the class jester and spends much energy getting attention of classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Provide many opportunities for student to gain recognition from his class members for positive activities, i.e. be a leader in a group.

2. Discuss the problem with the student so that he or she will realize that acting as the buffoon in the class prevents many classmates from getting to know his or her many fine qualities.

3. Encourage student to use some of his abilities to produce something special such as a provocative newspaper article, a poem or an artistic project.

20. Situation:

A gifted student is ridiculed by classmates for his or her intelligence.

Suggestions:

1. Observe student's classroom behavior to determine what is the cause of the ridicule.

2. Discuss findings with student.

3. Provide opportunities for the student to work with groups of students of similar mental ability, through resource classes and after school groups.

21. Situation:

The gifted student tries to monopolize class discussions.

Suggestions:

1. Hold a number of lessons on class discussions stressing the need for allowing all to participate.

2. Offer students many opportunities to hold small group discussions.

22. Situation:

The gifted student consistently argues with the teacher and class members.

Suggestions:

1. Teach class standard debate methods.

2. Whenever the student initiates an argument, record his or her point of view, ask for a volunteer to take the opposite point of view and schedule a debate. Insist that the debaters prepare carefully for the debate. Give them sufficient time for preparation. Hold the debate in class. Ask a well-qualified person to judge the debate.

3. Use specific chapters in Critical Thinking by Anita Harnadek as part of the English or Social Studies curriculum. This student text is appropriate for grades 6-12 and is published by Midwest Publications Co.

23. Situation:

The gifted student reads instead of paying attention to class lessons.

Suggestions:

1. Study the class lessons to decide if they are interesting and challenging to a gifted student.

2. It might be a wise choice for student to be excused from paying attention to a lesson which student has mastered. Perhaps he or she should be excused from the room during these periods.

3. Make arrangements for student to participate in challenging classroom activities.

4. If the student is absorbing the lesson even though he or she is reading a book, it may be appropriate to ignore his or her behavior.

24. Situation:

The gifted student pretends not to know something or does poorly on written work in order to gain the respect of classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Group students to work on lessons so that this student can gain social approval for what he or she is able to do.

2. Do not praise student for his or her ability in front of the class.

3. Arrange for student to have some short term or long term classes with students with similar mental ability.

25. Situation:

A gifted student's attitude in school is one of general boredom.

Suggestions:

1. Examine student's daily schedule and compare it with achievement and intelligence testing results to decide if more challenging work is needed.

2. Invite student to test out of various units (and perhaps some classes) and then provide more advanced options.

3. If you find that classwork is appropriate, provide more open-ended, self-designed assignments.

4. Ask student to be a member of a committee to plan assignments for a unit.

26. Situation:

Many gifted students in the class are far superior intellectually to their classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Use standardized test results data to design some advanced lessons in the areas in which they are most advanced. This type of instruction is sometimes called a cluster class because a small group of gifted students forms a cluster within the regular class and is offered a modified curriculum in some areas.

2. Provide many opportunities (perhaps science, social studies, art, music, and phy. ed.) where they will be part of the large group instruction.

27. Situation:

A small group of gifted students monopolizes classroom discussions.

Suggestions:

1. Please refer to the suggestion for situations where one student monopolizes discussions.

2. Hold small group discussions. If all of the usual monopolizers comprise a group they might quickly realize how difficult it is to have people monopolize discussions. After a few of these sessions this group might be willing to set some standards for discussions.

3. Another benefit from having the usual monopolizers in one group is that other groups will begin to develop more discussants.

28. Situation:

Student is extremely withdrawn and does not relate to any classmates.

Suggestions:

1. Do a sociogram for the class.

2. Rearrange seats so that the student sits near children who indicate a positive feeling toward him or her.

3. Plan partner assignments whenever possible so that student can work with a person whose desk is nearby.

4. After student begins to make friends with one youngster, arrange for these two students to work with another supportive pair.

5. Continue to build student's confidence throughout the curriculum.

PARENTS

1. Situation:

Parents of children in a gifted program wish to organize a parent support group.

Suggestions:

1. Suggest that they contact the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented for assistance. This organization's address is Box 70, 5701 Normandale Road, Minneapolis, MN 55424.

2. Assist parents by recommending knowledgeable speakers upon request. Betty Johnson, (612-544-6979), 1981-82 president of MCGT, is an excellent source for speakers.

2. Situation:

Parent questions the process used to select children for gifted program when their child is not included.

Suggestions:

1. Explain the selection process to the parents, being careful not to discuss scores of other students. In most cases it is not possible to afford to hold as many advanced classes as are needed. If appropriate, try to find a way to include the student in a gifted program as soon as possible.

3. Situation:

The student has parents who are putting extraordinary pressure on student to achieve to a degree which appears to be beyond his or her ability to do so.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss student's achievement test results and your expectations for the student with the parents. Emphasize student's strong points and try to alleviate their anxiety.

2. Discuss possible problems that inappropriate pressure can create. Dr. Julian Stanley of Johns Hopkins University has often stated that "parental zeal is not enough" because it is the student's inner drive which causes extraordinary achievement.

4. Situation:

The gifted student has parents who are so anxious for their youngster's popularity that their child's free time is over- scheduled.

Suggestions:

1. In a conference with the parents stress the values of a fine intellect, of the need the student has to pursue personal interests. Dr. Abraham Maslow's concept of a self-actualized person stresses that he probably has one or two close friends and has no need to be "popular". The student's personal needs and desires should be respected as much as possible.

2. Reassure the parents that their youngster is liked by classmates (if this is the case).

3. Talk to parents about their child's need for free time.

5. Situation:

The gifted student has parents who often find fault with the school and share their impressions with their child.

Suggestions:

1. In a conference with the parents openly discuss their concerns about the school. Try to make changes whenever possible. Stress the need for the student to respect the school so that the student will respect the educational process.

2. Follow up on the parents' suggestions for improvement whenever feasible.

6. Situation:

The gifted student has parents who pressure the school to double-promote their child.

Suggestions:

1. Carefully study test results, and evidence of social and emotional maturity of the student.

2. Discuss the matter with the principal, school psychologist, counselor, and other experts in this area.

3. Find out something about the child's friends. Are they all older than he?

4. Share this accumulation of information with the parents. It might be the best solution for him to be double-promoted. If there is some doubt it might be a good idea to table the question for 6 months or a year and then open it up for further discussion. If the promotion is made it should be done on an experimental basis for a few months and evaluated before a final decision is made.

5. An important factor to remember is that many children do very well being a year younger when they are in elementary school but the junior and senior high years are filled with agony because they are too immature. It is also very difficult to gracefully have them repeat a year in order to try to correct this problem.

7. **Situation:**

A gifted student's parents want school to be more open and follow a "free school" philosophy.

Suggestions:

1. Encourage the parents to study neighboring free schools and to spend as much time as possible observing the schools. It often is advisable to spend a whole school day following a child and keeping a record of everything done during the day. Then invite the parent to do the same thing at their student's school.

2. After they have gained a great deal of data, try to visit the school they recommend yourself.

3. Discuss with your principal the possibility of incorporating some aspects of the "free school" into your school. Perhaps a one hour "free choice" period per week could be tried or some other adjustment made.

8. **Situation:**

The gifted student has parents who show no interest in their child's school-work or activities.

Suggestions:

1. In a conference with the parents emphasize how few people are born with their child's intellectual ability. Without mentioning his actual I.Q. one could say something like this:

   "Only one person in one hundred has a mental ability like your child's." (I.Q. of 136) This table may be helpful.

The child whose IQ is:	is equalled or excelled by:
160	1 out of 10,000
156	3 out of 10,000
152	8 out of 10,000
148	2 out of 1,000
144	4 out of 1,000
140	7 out of 1,000
130	2 out of 100
125	6 out of 100
120	11 out of 100

2. Help the parents to see that a gift like their child's must be nurtured and encouraged. Discuss some ways in which this can be done.

3. Encourage parents to attend meetings of chapters of the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented. Information can be obtained from their office at Box 70, 5701 Normandale Road, Minneapolis, MN 55424.

4. The Program Specialist for the Gifted (612-296-4072) for the Minnesota State Department of Education has a bibliography and articles for parents.

9. **Situation:**

The gifted student has parents who demand completion of an inordinate number of chores at home making it difficult for student to complete homework, sometimes even including babysitting responsibilities.

Suggestions:

1. Refer to preceding page for information that should be useful in explaining the great gift that their child possesses. Student must have a steady, thorough education in order to build a strong foundation for future development.

2. Help the parents to realize that time for completion of homework and school attendance must not be denied to their children.

10. **Situation:**

The gifted student has parents who appear to be anti-intellectual and are anxious that their youngster get a job as soon as possible.

Suggestions:

1. Refer preceding pages in this section to help the parents understand their youngster's ability.

2. Help the parents to understand that a thorough education including college may lead to an extremely desirable kind of work.

3. Discuss this matter with the student and point out ideas on how to use personal interests in a lifetime occupation.

11. **Situation:**

The gifted student has parents who do not seem to be satisfied with anything their child does unless it is perfect.

Suggestions:

1. Discuss this problem with the parents and help them to understand that extremely high demands on anyone often can make the person unable to function in a healthy manner. A gifted child usually want to do well and enjoys each new challenge because of an expectation that he or she can succeed. However, parents who are never satisfied will destroy this enthusiasm and eventually youngster will not even try. This is how underachievement becomes a destructive pattern. Although student may not be perfect in everything, he or she still is a most worthwhile person.

2. Work with the parents to develop a plan with the parents so they can conscientiously find ways to honestly accept their child's less than perfect achievements.

12. Situation:

A gifted student has a family situation where he has minimal contact with males. A similar case is a two-parent home when the father is physically or emotionally absent much of the time.

Suggestions:

1. Schedule student to have positive educational and recreational experiences with men on the staff. Perhaps one or more periods per week could be conducted in one of the male teacher's rooms.

2. If the father is in the home try to encourage him to have some special regular activity with his youngster.

3. Encourage the student to participate in community activities where there would be contact with men.

4. Find out if the Big Brother Program is available in your town.

13. Situation:

Parents complain that their gifted student's teacher is too easy on their child and the youngster is developing very sloppy work habits.

Suggestions:

1. Refer the parents to the principal because the principal is responsible for the faculty.

2. If this complaint is made about a number of teachers, plan a staff workshop about gifted students, their specific needs, and realistic teacher expectations.

14. Situation:

You are receiving an inordinate number of phone calls at home from a parent of a youngster in your gifted class.

Suggestions:

1. Suggest that a conference be set up so that a thorough discussion can be held. At this conference emphasize that it takes a period of time for program changes to be effective. It is usually a good idea to jointly decide upon a schedule for updating each other on the student's progress.

1. Situation:

A member of the community states that gifted education is elitist.

Suggestions:

1. Refer to the fact that public schools are created to develop the potential of all students. Just as the student with extraordinary athletic talent is encouraged to practice and do as well as possible in school athletics, so should the academically talented be given the opportunity to develop his or her specific talent or ability. The youngster whose ability is limited is given specific instruction so that his or her potential will be developed as far as possible. In all cases, each student should be given an education which is appropriate for his or her specific needs. (The Palcuzzi Ploy follows.)

2. Situation:

Local legislator asks questions about gifted education which you cannot answer.

Suggestions:

1. Contact the Coalition for the Gifted and Talented co-chairmen Jeanne Knox (612-822-1270) or Sheryl Halpern (612-933-7571) for answers to legislation-related questions.

2. Contact the Program Specialist for Gifted Education (612-296-4072) for information.

3. Situation:

A member of the community speaks against ability grouping because it is "against the law."

Suggestions:

1. Explain that this belief is derived from a specific suit in Washington, D.C., where the school district was sued by a citizen for its tracking system. This citizen charged that a child in a low track first grade would not be able to change to a college prep track in high school. He won the suit and all ability grouping was against the law in Washington, D.C., schools. Ability grouping is against the law only in the Washington, D.C., public schools. It is a local district law, not a federal law.

THE PALCUZZI PLOY

Mr. Palcuzzi, principal of the Jefferson Elementary School, once got tired of hearing objections to special provisions for gifted children, so he decided to spice an otherwise mild P.T.A. meeting with his proposal for gifted children. The elements of the Paluczzi program were as follows:

(]) Children should be grouped by ability. (2) Part of the school day should be given over to special instruction. (3) Talented students should be allowed time to share their talents with children of other schools in the area or even of other schools throughout the state. (We will pay the transportation cost.) (4) A child should be advanced according to his talents, rather than according to his age. (5) These children should have special teachers, specially trained and highly salaried.

As might be expected, the "Palcuzzi Program" was subjected to a barrage of criticism. "What about the youngster who isn't able to fit into the special group: Won't his ego be damaged?" "How about the special cost; how could you justify transportation costs that would have to be paid by moving a special group of students from one school to another?" "Mightn't we be endangering the child by having him interact with children who are much more mature than he is?" "Wouldn't the other teachers complain if we gave more money to the instruction of this group?"

After listening for ten or fifteen minutes, Mr. Palcuzzi dropped his bomb! He said that he wasn't describing a new program for the intellectually gifted, but a program the school system had been enthusiastically supporting for a number of years -- the program for the gifted basketball players! Palcuzzi took advantage of the silence that followed to review his program again. Do we have ability grouping on our basketball team? Yes, we do. No doubt, the player who does not make the first team or the second team feels very badly about it and may even have some inferiority feelings. However, this will not likely cause the program to be changed.

Do we allow part of the school day to be given over to special work? Generally speaking, the last hour of the day can be used, by tradition, for practice of basketball talents. Do we allow these children to share their talents with other students from other schools, and other cities? Yes, we do, and, what is more, we pay the transportation costs involved without very many complaints being heard.

Do we allow gifted basketball players to advance by their talents rather than by their age? Indeed we do. Any sophomore who can make the team on the basis of his talents gets the privilege of playing with seniors, and no one worries very much about it. Finally, do we have special teachers who are specially trained and more highly salaried than the ordinary teacher? Yes, we do, and while there is some grumbling about it from the regular teachers, this does not materially affect the program.

What does this tell us? The culture and the community will support the kinds of activities which it finds necessary, valuable, and/or enjoyable. If they feel that it is sufficiently enjoyable or sufficiently necessary, then all

sorts of objections are put aside as being relatively inconseqential. If, on the other hand, the community is not fully interested or involved in supporting such a program, all kinds of objections can be raised as to why these things shouldn't be done, or couldn't be done.

... From Teaching the Gifted Child,
by James Gallagher
Allyn and Bacon, 1964, P. 89-91